

## VI. Overview of Key Respondent Comments Regarding System Gaps, Strengths and Recommendations for Strengthening the System

Over 45 interviews were conducted. A list of key respondents is included at the end of this section. Key respondents included Youth Council and selected WDC members, including key Snohomish stakeholders from juvenile justice, educational, business, labor, housing, human service and other arenas. Staff from current WIA funded youth programs were included in the key respondent group.

Summary of Main Strengths of the Youth Employability System	Summary of Main Gaps in the Youth Employability System	Summary of Recommendations for Strengthening the System
Providers in the system are really committed to quality programming for youth; they care about youth succeeding and want the system to work for them	The system just does not have enough money to serve all of the youth who need assistance. Too few youth are served and services are too limited for those who are served.	Find a way to increase the funding for the system. (Nearly everyone interviewed included this comment in their recommendations)
There are some strong service provider partnerships in the system.	There are not many programs, services or even outreach efforts to the more rural parts of the county. Many rural youth have no access to programs or services.	The system should focus more on data: examine system data before making resource decisions, promote data sharing and articulate a system definition of success.
The business community is genuinely supportive and wants to be involved.	The system really needs to examine the core needs of youth and create support systems around those needs. We need to significantly change the system and recognize that it is no longer JTPA.	School districts can't be open 365 days of the year and they need to keep working on partnerships with agencies that can do what schools can't.
The system cares about kids. We don't give up, we keep trying.	There is a lack of data in the system, especially comparative, county-wide data and good follow-up data on participants.	Continue discussions on our overall system in terms of quality of providers, quality of service and the best strategies for limited funds.
The system is very collaborative in theory and desire.	The business community is not really engaged and needs to be through job placements, funding, expertise.	Reduce existing service duplication, simplify the system.
WIA places more emphasis on follow-up and that's a positive change; the new system has a good design.	School year work experiences, although they have to be balanced with school and homework.	Work on becoming more of a system with more sharing of information, data and joint planning.
Youth who do get served get real help and many services have made a difference in the lives of youth participants.	Youth who are not connected to school or other programs are not getting served.	Increase follow-up capability in the system, as well as data that would help inform decisions.
People are trying to be innovative.	The system can be confusing with so many programs; it's hard for youth.	Create more flexible options for youth in both the school and work world.
Providers are really committed and try to develop relationships in the community that will benefit youth.	The system is fairly competitive, with everyone collecting their own data and worried about numbers.	The membership of the Youth Council needs to be examined. The right players need to be there and commit to engage and attend.
The new system had to be put together quickly and	There needs to be more leadership development	Social service agencies, youth and parents need to

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the Youth Council did a good job being inclusive and inviting people to participate.	opportunities for youth and increased opportunities for youth to volunteer.	be included on the Youth Council; attendance needs to improve and the relationship between the Council and WDC needs to be strengthened.
WorkSource Centers and schools are valuable resources in the system.	There is good collaboration on an individual project level, but not on a larger, systemic level.	The system needs to get better at real collaboration: joint planning, joint projects, everyone clear on what's working and what needs to be done.
	There is some service duplication in the system.	Find a way to add some summer programming to the system,
	There is a general lack of knowledge and understanding about the new system. Many youth agencies don't really know the system now and its difficult to get information if you're not involved directly in youth employment.	Provide more general information about the WIA system to the youth serving community at large – especially needed is detailed information on how to help youth access programs.
The current school program partnership is effective because it offers in-school connections to youth.	Summer jobs helped a lot of youth develop skills and see the need for school. Summer jobs are a large gap in the system	Work on increased flexibility of programming and ways to serve youth who do not fit into WIA categories, including working with more agencies to find and refer youth.
	There is no umbrella organization for youth services and services are more fragmented and overhead is higher as a result.	Business has to be more actively engaged so that they play a larger design and advisory role, do more mentoring and youth hiring.
	There is not enough career preparation in the system.	Services should be focused on a critical transition period (8 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> grade).
	There are not enough job placement opportunities, especially for harder to place and handicapped youth.	Increase the collaboration with other community groups: United Way, Health & Safety Network, YWCA, housing authority so youth employment is part of everyone's planning and survey work.
	The youth employment system is not visible in the community. Spreading out the funding has watered down the effect and may be preventing us from leveraging other funding.	Focus the funding on one big, visible effort that is focused on a business partnership – something people can see and identify with. The SnoIsle Skills Center would be a good place to focus efforts and design a way for them to serve at-risk youth.
	We have to help business understand how to be a partner and we haven't done that.	Evaluate programs and determine which are the most effective in a system with limited dollars.
	The pot of money is too small to be divided up so much. It would be more effective, and less overhead, to have one contractor.	Increase the recognition of the value of careers in trades among educators, parents and youth.

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The transition to WIA was pretty smooth and staff did a good job in a short amount of time.	The system is not well enough integrated with other community agencies.	Help business understand that they have to be involved in the long haul of education reform and recognize jobs as an important part of change for youth
		Focus the money more and provide more intensive services. The transition to 9 <sup>th</sup> grade would be a good focus area. (Several respondents mentioned 9 <sup>th</sup> graders as a good focus area)
		Really evaluate what happened during the first year with contracts, outcomes before going into another RFP.

**In summary, these themes emerged from our interviews:**

- System Needs More Resources
- Focus More Dollars on 8th-9th Graders
- Collaborate More Within Youth Employment System — Become More of a System
- Collaborate More with Community Agencies
- Work on Youth Council Membership and Relationship with WDC
- Engage Business/Labor in Larger Role

## Key Respondents

Key Stakeholders	
Name	Affiliation
Matt Bench	WorkSource
Darrell Chapman	Labor
Juanita Comeau	Everett School District
Bruce Eklund/Marilyn Finsen	Juvenile Justice
Teena Ellison	Youth RAP
Jeff Estes	Business
Sarri Gilman	Cocoon House
Kevin Harrigan	School Work Initiative
Jeriann Holly	Washington Mutual
Fred Keene	Job Corps
Sandra Kelly	Lakewood School District
Matt King	CCA
Sarah Mariani	Health and Safety Network
Carol McCabe	Edmonds District
Maddy-Utt Metzger	YMCA
Jennifer Nickel	WorkSource
Michelle Rastovich	Snohomish County Human Services Department – Office of Children’s Affairs
Cathy Schindler	Snohomish Housing Authority
Dennis Smith/Sabeth Fitzgiven	United Way

PROMISING PRACTICES CONTACTS	
Name	Affiliation
Darrell Armstead	Yakima OIC
Dr. Lisa Berglund	Consultant Annie E. Casey and San Diego WDC
Eric Ford	Woodland Job Corps
Kate Garza	Angel Job Corps Center
Dr. Roberta Iversen	University of Pennsylvania
Alex Kosmides	Bellingham WDC
Charles Lewis	Employment Security (WIA Youth Program Coordinator)
Julie Macintosh	Skagit Career Center
Bob McKay	Child Welfare League of America, Washington D.C.
Linda Nelson	Skagit Island Tech Prep
Rick Rowray	Youth Opportunity Center
Joyce Vail/Eric Steiner	Dept. of Labor
Doug Walker	State Street School (Sedro Woolley)
Chris Webster	Employment Security

**KEY RESPONDENTS**

<b>WDC Members</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Linda Byrnes	Supt. Arlington District
John Knutsen	Express Personnel Services
Wayne Robertson	Supt. Edmonds District
Jo Marie Schultz	IAM/Boeing
Travis Snider	BETS Associates

<b>Community Agency Interviews</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Claudia Dickinson	Family Support Center of South Snohomish County
Kari Rice	Lake Stevens Family Center

<b>Data Contacts</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Karen Johnson	Edmonds Community College
Darryl Dieter	Everett Community College

## VII. Overview of Section 8 Survey Results

The Section 8 Survey Results are attached in Appendix A. The responses of 777 Snohomish County Housing Authority Section 8 recipients attests to the great demand for creating a strong youth development/employment system in Snohomish County.

## VIII. Consultant Recommendations Regarding Next Steps

### a) **System Building Recommendations**

#### **Planning Efforts and Client Bases**

There are several groups in Snohomish County that either collect data or have client bases that have intersections with Youth Council needs and goals. A stronger relationship with these efforts and organizations could help further the Youth Council's work. Some examples include:

- ***Community Health & Safety Network***

The central affiliate (geographic area) of the Network is focusing on youth needs and there may be some useful collaboration ideas for both the Youth Council and the Network. The Network will work on their next biennium plan soon and expects to continue supporting and funding the focus areas their affiliates have chosen.

Contact: Sarah Mariani (425-252-2688), Community Outreach Coordinator

- ***United Way of Snohomish County***

United Way of Snohomish County is currently working on a follow-up to their 1995 community assessment. They have forty community partners, including two youth, and are designing a comprehensive community assessment.

The assessment has a youth section, which will cover gangs, violence, substance abuse and school issues – all of which could be relevant to the Youth Council. There are currently no questions about employment or career plans or needs. The Youth Council could work with United Way to make sure that youth employment questions are a part of future work. Contact: Sabeth Fitzgiven (425) -290-8499

- ***Snohomish County Housing Authority, Transitional Housing***

The housing authority agreed to mail a youth employment focused survey to the 2,500 Section 8 residents in scattered locations across the county as part of the Youth Council's current strategic planning process. The housing authority is a good source of both information dissemination (to residents) and of data collection and is very interested in working more closely with the WDC/Youth Council. Similar relationships may be established with Transitional Housing and Homeless Providers.

Contact: Cathy Schindler (425) 290-8499, Snohomish Housing Authority

- ***Outreach to Independent Living, Programs, Foster Youth and Foster parents***

Foster youth are represented in many of the programs funded by the Workforce Development Council. Some of these youth may be eligible for activities funded through the Chafee Foster Care

Independence Program. Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- 1) Helping children receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
- 2) Helping them prepare for and enter post secondary training and education institutions; and
- 3) Financial, housing, counseling and preventive health services.

Collaboration with foster youth providers and partners is needed to ensure that foster youth enrolled in WIA funded programs are able to access available Chafee funded activities. Furthermore, cross system planning efforts should include strategic integration of Chafee and WIA dollars.

- ***Churches***

Faith based services and programs could play an increasingly important role in community services. Working with existing faith based networks or coalitions could help strengthen the youth employment system in terms of visibility and sustainability. Particularly after new strategies and priorities are agreed upon, the WDC and Youth Council should meet with the network of Snohomish County faith based services and programs to make sure youth employment priorities are shared.

## **Agencies and Organizations that Could Partner with WDC to Provide Services**

There are also a few agencies and organizations that could play significant roles in new youth employment scenarios. All of them, at a minimum, should become strong partners of the WDC/Youth Council or have existing partnerships strengthened and formalized:

### ***Juvenile Justice System***

The Snohomish County juvenile justice system is moving toward a more comprehensive examination of young offenders and their sentencing/probation needs and is looking more closely at youth employment. Judges are now more frequently ordering youth offenders to find a job, especially if they have too much unstructured time, and probation officers need consistent help in working with their caseloads on job readiness skills and job placements. The system currently hires a private consultant to work with youth and help them find jobs, but can only do so with the occasional extra funds in their annual budget and would like to have a consistent, county wide system for referral and assistance.

Although it is true that current WDC contractors do serve youth involved in the juvenile justice system, this is a very different situation than a systemic, organized approach to working with the courts to ensure that job readiness skills and job placement and follow-up services are routinely provided to youth offenders. A possible WDC juvenile justice effort could be set up as (for example) an out of school project that funded an employment contractor to work extensively with the probation officers and had regularly scheduled job readiness classes and interviews, job placement and follow-up; employer education and at least six month follow-up services. Feedback loops between employers and the court system could be set

up and data generated to see what effect employment services had on young offenders.

The juvenile justice system could be expected to help with screening and eligibility as well as ongoing case management and data collection.

Juvenile Court Contact: Bruce Eklund, Assistant Administrator, 425-388-7850

### ***SnoIsle Skills Center***

Since there are very few comprehensive skills centers in the state, it is worth examining whether there could be increased partnership opportunities with SnoIsle. As several key respondents interviewed were interested in at least examining the idea of focusing WIA funds on one education or training project and having it be visible, it seems worth exploring partnership ideas with the nearby skills center.

Although they may not currently serve many academically at-risk youth, a possible scenario may be to fund a special project to get a group of youth ready for skills center programs and follow them through graduation and job placement. Case management, tutoring and academic skills elevation would be built into the project and the goal would be to work with the skills center to increase opportunities for students who need the most help.

### ***Job Corps***

While Job Corps programs seem separate because of their comprehensive, residential components, there are examples of Job Corps Centers collaborating fully with community programs for youth training and leadership opportunities, learning centers, staff expertise and joint planning. The Angel Job Corps Center in Yachatts, Oregon is a good example (contact: Kate Garza, 541-547-3137 X279) of collaboration. They have developed a strong partnership with the local school district, One Stop Center and WIA

funded youth providers. The One Stop is co-located with the Angel Center and they share resources as much as possible. Job Corps Center staff teach resume writing classes at the One Stop and One Stop staff teach an introduction to using the One Stop to all entering Job Corps participants. They have agreed to joint enrollment of Job Corps participants and WIA program participants in learning center classes, training programs or anything either of them runs as long as there is space available. They also share materials, purchased curricula and anything that would stretch resources.

The Angel Job Corps facility has quite a bit of space and they host the local career fairs for high school students. They are currently planning on hosting a county-wide career fair and are working with local community colleges and school districts so that everyone in the area will be included.

According to the Department of Labor, there is still a decision pending on whether a Job Corps Center will be relocated to Paine Field, which would be an additional opportunity for a creative Snohomish County collaboration.

### ***Community Colleges***

Several people interviewed expressed an interest in working even more closely with community colleges. There are several existing collaborations between community colleges and youth employment programs, but given the possibilities that may exist in a community college/employment network, it would be useful to organize a serious discussion group of regional community colleges, high schools and employment programs to talk about moving the collaboration to a higher level. For example, if WIA funds were used to enhance or initiate an alternative school that served both in school and out of school youth, it would be a nice addition to ask community colleges to fund tuition for graduates of the school. Community college tuition would be an extra incentive for alternative school



students and would bring community colleges even closer to the school districts and youth employment providers working with the alternative school.

### ***Workforce Training and Education Board***

The board will soon be hiring a Manager of Training and Educational Partnerships who will assist local Workforce Development Councils and their Youth Councils to connect workforce development strategies to educational resources in their communities. Strategies will include, but not be limited to:

- linking educational reform and school-to-career efforts;
- enhancing career guidance;
- increasing mentor and work-based learning opportunities;
- facilitating opportunities for WDC Youth Councils to share best practices and opportunities;
- connecting with vocationally - oriented youth programs, such as Americorp and Junior Achievement;
- exploring grant possibilities and conducting research on initiatives resulting in increased capacity of high schools, community and technical colleges, and apprenticeship programs to provide high quality workforce training and education programs.

## **b) Decision Map and Timeline**

### **Overall Principles and Context for Decisions**

- WIA funds should be focused on a strategy (or two at most) that will produce measurable outcomes and that is effective enough and understandable enough to attract additional funding.
- A target youth population has to be identified in order to increase effectiveness. WIA funding is not enough to serve more than a small to moderate portion of youth employment need in Snohomish County.
- Focusing on populations that will reduce system wide recruitment efforts will increase efficiency of WIA funding. Juvenile justice and transitional housing systems, for example, have defined populations of teens with several risk factors.
- WIA dollars should be used, as much as possible, to leverage change in other youth serving systems. Examples could include increasing educational choices through school districts, increasing community college services to drop outs and ensuring career readiness and job placements are a part of the juvenile justice system.
- WIA strategies should include integral and varied roles for businesses – both small and large. Technical assistance for businesses to set up youth employment, training and intern programs should be included in program design.
- WIA strategies must also include mechanisms to provide 12 month follow-up data on recipients and should include the current Youth Council priorities of youth advocacy, leadership development, case management, tutoring and counseling.
- Nationally recognized WIA strategies have focused resources and planning on a targeted, defined population and worked hard to increase rates of success (graduation, job retention, training completion) instead of providing limited services to larger populations.
- Both the Youth Council and the WDC need to consider critical questions listed on the attached timeline and map. This is particularly important as the Youth Council may not be able to reach full consensus on next priorities, due in part, to the inclusion of many current WIA awardees on the Council, and to the complexity of the issues raised. Furthermore, the decision making responsibility ultimately lies on the shoulders of the WDC as it is charged with overseeing youth and adult systems that are well integrated and designed to serve the diverse needs of community residents.

## Key Decision Questions

Decision	Questions/Discussion Issues	Decision Date and Decision Authority
<b>What is the single most important thing that should be successfully accomplished with WIA youth funding for in school and out of school youth in the next two years?</b>	<b>How will this accomplishment be measured?</b>  This is the core outcome and should be easily understood and measurable.	
<b>What is the best in-school strategy for WIA dollars in Snohomish County and what percentage of our funding should be allocated to in-school youth?</b>	<b>What is our long term goal for funding in-school youth employment services? Will results be visible?</b>  If the goal is increasing graduation rates, the focus should be on effective ways to keep students in schools, with many options for credits and diplomas.  If the goal is building employment services capacity in schools, strategies should require increasingly large resource commitments from schools, such as more and more attention to career pathways and internships.  If the goal is providing the services for school districts, a companion work plan could be that of requiring increased alternative education options from school districts.	
	<b>What type of educational change should WIA partnerships leverage within school districts?</b>  This will depend on the goal chosen above, but the partnership should leverage some type of substantive change on the part of districts: more effective alternative schools, outreach to drop outs, more emphasis on careers and internships, partnerships with business are all examples. At a minimum, there should be improved coordination and feedback loops between schools and workplace services.	

Decision	Questions/Discussion Issues	Decision Date and Decision Authority
	<p><b>Is it effective to involve multiple school districts?</b></p> <p>If the overall goal is to increase graduation rates or build youth employment services capacity in districts, it may be useful to work with more than one district. If the goal is primarily to provide effective services to youth it will likely be more efficient to work with one district, given the funding limitations.</p>	
<p><b>What is the best in-school strategy for WIA dollars in Snohomish County and what percentage of our funding should be allocated to in-school youth?</b></p>	<p><b>How will success be measured?</b></p> <p>Measurements of success should be goal specific. A main goal of increasing graduation rates would, for example, need to include a baseline graduation rate for each school and then a target graduation rate. A strategy of providing employment services to youth has obvious goals, but all units of service (counseling, job placement) should be standardized and clearly defined. All measurements of success and how they will be collected should be agreed upon by all partners before services begin, including 12 month follow-up data.</p>	
	<p><b>Is business involvement an integral part of the strategy with provisions for both small and large businesses and available technical assistance?</b></p> <p>Business involvement should not be added on to a strategy or confined to the traditional summer job hiring. Many businesses will need help in setting up all types of youth programs: internships, mentoring, training and employment. In addition, the interface between business people and educators or social service providers can be a difficult one that needs to be planned and nurtured.</p>	
	<p><b>Does our strategy make the best use of WIA resources by maximizing existing school or training resources?</b></p>	

Decision	Questions/Discussion Issues	Decision Date and Decision Authority
	<p><b>Is there any way this strategy could or should be linked to our out of school strategy?</b></p> <p>Funding an existing alternative school or skills center to serve both in school and out of school youth, can be an effective way to reach youth and leverage WIA dollars.</p> <p>Another idea might be to create a new alternative school that served several districts and reached out to out of school youth with a combination of academics and employment.</p>	
<p><b>What is the best out of school strategy for WIA dollars in Snohomish County and what percentage of our funding should be allocated to out of school youth?</b></p>	<p><b>What are our goal priorities for out of school youth?</b></p> <p>Getting youth back into school, working on a GED, enrolling in a community college or training program and/or finding a job are all important short term goals.</p> <p>It is worth discussing the long term goals of WIA funding to make sure strategies support long term goals. A goal of reducing drop out rates so that there are fewer out of school youth, for example, would likely need attention directed to more creative educational opportunities and close partnerships with districts and community colleges.</p>	
	<p><b>How will success be measured in our out of school projects?</b></p> <p>It will not be possible to define success without being clear about goals – both short and long term. Because out of school youth projects require more recruitment, it would be really helpful to design a program with existing groups (transitional housing, juvenile justice for example) and build solid partnerships that can lead to greater system change.</p>	
	<p><b>Have we put together broad enough partnerships to address the needs of out of school youth?</b></p>	

Decision	Questions/Discussion Issues	Decision Date and Decision Authority
	<p><b>What system changes will be created for out of school youth?</b></p> <p>The business involvement with out of school youth can be much harder to put together and may require more education and technical assistance for business partners. Community colleges, housing and social service agencies are critical to out of school efforts.</p>	
	<p><b>Does our strategy make the best use of WIA resources by maximizing existing education or training resources?</b></p>	
	<p><b>Is there any way this strategy could or should be linked to our in school strategy?</b></p>	
<p><b>What is the best solution for underserved rural areas in Snohomish County?</b></p>	<p><b>Is it possible to effectively serve both urban and rural in and out of school youth with WIA funds in Snohomish County?</b></p> <p>It may be a more effective strategy to choose either rural or urban youth to serve with WIA funds and use the WDC as a spearhead to raise non-WIA funds for focused projects in whatever parts of the County that are not served by WIA funds.</p> <p>One way to make the decision may be to use WIA funds in areas that would be more difficult to sponsor a privately funded project. The important piece of this decision is in using the WDC members as leverage for funding and private sector involvement and probably in not attempting more than one or two such projects at a time.</p>	
<p><b>Do your chosen in school and out of school strategies support the single most important accomplishment in the first decision box?</b></p>	<p><b>If the strategies chosen above will not successfully deliver your single most important accomplishment, start over and hone everything down to that first chosen accomplishment.</b></p>	

## SNOHOMISH DECISION TIMELINE

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Work Item</b>	<b>Notes/Issues</b>
<b>Sept. 30th</b>	<b>Youth Council recommendations on in school and out of school strategies completed.</b>	
<b>Oct.</b>	<b>WDC is briefed on recommendations.</b>	
<b>Nov. 30</b>	<b>WDC returns recommendations to Youth Council.</b>	
<b>Dec./Jan.</b>	<b>Youth Council designs collaboration strategies to match youth strategies, including adding new council members. Reasonable plans for using some people/groups as sounding boards and not as council members will be in place.</b>	
<b>Feb.</b>	<b>WDC holds community forum to explain new strategies and RFP process to as many youth/education/community groups as possible. This attempt could also include planned ways for the WDC to become more visible in the community.</b>	
<b>March/April</b>	<b>New RFPS are completed and review/selection process takes place</b>	
<b>June</b>	<b>WDC/Youth Council jointly meet to review process, selection and first year goals for measuring success and continuing collaboration. Measurements would be included in the contracts, ensuring that WDC and Youth Council are in agreement about what to expect from changed direction and focus.</b>	